

VZCZCXRO1181
PP RUEHBC RUEHDBU RUEHDE RUEHDIR RUEHKUK
DE RUEHKB #0673 1511236
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 311236Z MAY 07
FM AMEMBASSY BAKU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3132
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHDIR/IRAN RPO DUBAI PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CDR USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAKU 000673

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/29/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [IR](#) [AJ](#)

SUBJECT: OVER 1,000 ETHNIC AZERIS REPORTEDLY ARRESTED IN
IRAN

Classified By: DCM Donald Lu for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (SBU) Baku media outlets report that over 1,000 ethnic Azeris have been arrested in connection with demonstrations commemorating the one-year anniversary of large-scale ethnic Azeri protests which took place in northwestern Iran on 22 May 2006. According to these reports, largely peaceful demonstrations took place in the northwestern cities of Tabriz, Zanzan and Orumiyeh, with the 23 May 2007 demonstration in Tabriz reportedly involving over 30,000 demonstrators.

¶2. (C) While press reports suggest that Iranian security forces fired upon demonstrators in Tabriz, Professor Gholam-Reza Sabri-Tabrizi, head of the Coordinating Committee of World Azerbaijanis, reported that there have been no deaths in connection with this year's protests. Another contact reported that approximately 2,000 demonstrators have been arrested, 500 in Orumiyeh alone. Subsequent, smaller-scale demonstrations have reportedly taken place in Tabriz protesting the continued detention of these demonstrators.

¶3. (C) Comment: Assessing the veracity of these reports is difficult, especially given the lack of photographic or other evidence usually available to support similar claims. Unlike the May 2006 protests which generated a considerable amount of photographic and video evidence (later surfacing on diaspora websites and GunAz Television), none has emerged in connection with this year's protests. We will continue to monitor the situation and report any developments. End Comment.

DERSE